

Strategy: Key Thinkers

By Tom Kane

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Over twenty two centuries ago, the Greek general Pyrrhus questioned the real gains of military victory. Today we might reflect on the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in much the same way. War is not only cruel but capricious; its outcomes are often bitter and frustrating, even for the winning side.

Strategy: Key Thinkers expertly introduces the ideas of major strategic thinkers whose work explores the complex challenges associated with the use of military force. Early chapters deal with the foundational work of Sun Tzu (Sunzi), Thucydides, Vegetius, Machiavelli and Carl von Clausewitz and their relevance to problems facing Western militaries today. The book then considers broader issues, such as the distinctive importance of air and maritime operations, the difficulty of waging offensive land warfare in the face of modern firepower, the implications of nuclear weapons, and the potential of irregular warfare. It concludes by highlighting key themes which connect - and distinguish - the works under consideration, noting how these similarities and differences can inform the strategic debates of the early twenty-first century.

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Review
"Strategic thought moves strategic practice. Tom Kane's outstanding book explains the enduring relevance of strategic ideas to our human security condition."
Colin Gray, University of Reading

"A uniquely accessible and profound examination of the foundations of contemporary strategic thought. This book should be the starting point for anyone who wishes to understand the theory of war. A major intellectual achievement."
Eric Grove, Liverpool Hope University

"Thoughtful, engaging, and even entertaining, this first-rate book does far more than just present readers with a list of strategic thinkers and their basic ideas – it explains, clearly and precisely, why strategy matters. Readers will gain a deeper appreciation of how the practice of strategy influences the fate of states, and how strategic failure may carry a terrible price."
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About the Author
Dr. Thomas M. Kane is Director of the Centre for Security Studies at the University of Hull.

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